

## Small Flies: THE ULTIMATE MOBILE PEST

There are many flies that can be nuisances in structures. Most of them don't cause any physical damage, they simply are annoying to the occupants. This pest press will focus on some of the smaller species of flies that can be pests in schools.



Drain Fly  
Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org

### Drain Flies

Drain flies are a general name for tiny flies in the family Psychodidae. They are also called moth flies because of their moth-like appearance.

Drain flies need constant moisture to breed in, such as shallow standing water, slime growing in drains, and other places where moisture can build up. These flies are merely a nuisance since they do not bite, but they are good indicators of unsanitary conditions. The best way to control moth flies is to eliminate their breeding grounds. Drain or clean up any standing water, no matter how small the amount. If there are toilets in the building that are used less than once a week, flush them weekly. Clean out organic matter and trash from drains and make sure no slime, mold, or scum is growing around any constantly moist areas. The use of pesticides is unnecessary when dealing with these flies. Good sanitation should clear up most problems.



Humpbacked fly

Sanford D. Porter, USDA-ARS, Center for Medical, Agricultural and Veterinary Entomology, Bugwood.org

Humpbacked flies are probably most famous for their beneficial use against fire ants. The species of humpbacked fly shown above actually attacks and lays its eggs inside the bodies of fire ants. Unfortunately, in this family of tiny flies, there are also some species that serve as indoor pests.

The humpbacked flies that become pests indoors can become a problem when certain conditions are present. These include: dead or wet organic matter, rotting vegetables, garbage, moist soil, or soil with sewage in it, and drains that constantly stay moist. These conditions give them a place to lay their eggs as well as a food supply.

Practicing good sanitation should prevent these flies from becoming a problem. Do not leave fruit or vegetables lying out in the open for long periods of time. Clean drains weekly. Change indoor garbage bags weekly as needed. Keep dumpsters at least ten feet away from the entrances to buildings. These measures should keep pest species from becoming a problem without the use of chemicals.

## How do we tell the difference between flies and other insects?

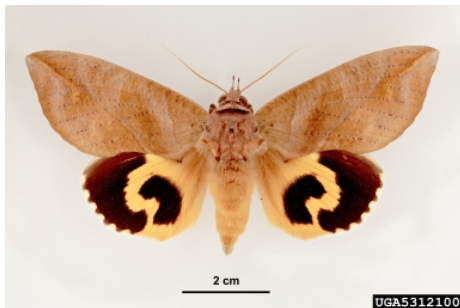
There are many kinds of flying insects that may purposely or accidentally invade schools and other structures. It's important to know what kind of insect is present to choose appropriate control measures.

Flies are different from nearly all other insects in that they only have two wings. Most winged insects have four wings. Most of them also have a distinctive look and flight pattern, but when in doubt, the wings are a great way to tell if you're dealing with a fly or not.



### Flower fly with two wings

Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org



### Fruit-piercing moth with two front wings and two hind wings

Pest and Diseases Image Library, Bugwood.org



### Dark-winged Fungus Gnat Adult

Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org



### Dark-winged Fungus Gnat Larva

Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

Fungus gnats are very similar to drain flies in their lifestyles, breeding sites, and problems. Like most small flies they need moisture and organic matter for their breeding sites. They can become problems indoors when leaks occur, when organic matter builds up in drains, and when infested potted plants are brought indoors. If they become a problem, clean out all drains, check water sources for leaks, and put up sticky traps.

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